

**LIHWAP update:
Opportunities for data sharing between
regulated water utilities and CSD**

**Presentation to the Low Income Oversight Board
April 12, 2023**



**California Department of
Community Services & Development**



Low Income Oversight Board

Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

- The Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)
 - One-time federal program
 - Relief for low-income customers for past-due or current water bills
 - Operating in California June 2022 to September 2023



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Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

- Funding and expenditures
 - \$116 million to California
 - \$87.5 million in direct benefits
 - As of April 10th, \$20 million in benefits have been disbursed (= 25,000 households)



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Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

- Addressing challenges
 - Identifying ways to inform customers about the program and connect them to services
 - Leveraging categorical eligibility for LIHEAP participants +
Working with regulated water utilities =

Opportunity to use data sharing to benefit low-income Californians



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Water Utility Data Sharing

- CPUC directive since mid-1990 for electric and mid-2000 for water utilities
- Bi-annual data sharing arrangement with electric utilities established in D.11-05-020, increased to quarterly through D.21-07-029
- Program offered by all Class A (>10,000 connection) water systems
- Majority of enrollment through quarterly data match



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Water Utility Data Sharing

- CARE customers are auto enrolled in Customer Assistance Program (CAP)
- Over 300,000 customers currently enrolled representing 25% of all customers served by Class A utilities
- CAP enrollment is 35% higher than pre-pandemic
- 26,833 CAP customers with arrearage totaling \$18.3 million as of January 2023



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Water Utility Assistance Through LIHWAP

- Funding available through LIHWAP
- Enrollment barriers due to high level of effort on part of customer (application and income verification)
- Further coordination needed with Local Service Providers who may have capacity issues
- Data match directly with CSD streamlines enrollment process, increases enrollment, and provides more immediate relief to customers
- Arrangement can serve as model for all water utilities throughout the state



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